

DEAR PARTICIPANTS IN THE VIKING 22 MULTINATIONAL
DISTRIBUTED COMPUTER-ASSISTED COMMAND AND STAFF
EXERCISE,

It is my pleasure to welcome you at Rakovski National Defence College - the oldest higher military institution in Bulgaria! Founded in 1912, for more than a century, the College contributes not only to the establishment of the officers' corps, but also to building and establishing good traditions in higher military education. Today, 110 years after its establishment, the College is one of the leading national educational higher institutions with many years of experience in training and educating military leaders and leaders for structures dealing with national security and defence.

The VIKING exercises have been planned and conducted since 1999 under the leadership of the Armed Forces of the Kingdom of Sweden. Over the years, the United Nations, NATO and the European Union have increased their participation in the exercise, making VIKING one of the most sophisticated platforms for training staffs and organizations in overcoming international crises.

The National Defence College has already hosted the VIKING 14 and VIKING 18 exercises. As of today, we are hosting of the largest international exercises – the "VIKING 22" Distributed Computer-Assisted Command and Staff exercise for the third time one. During it, on 5th of April 2022 a Day for high-ranking guests and media will be held.

The VIKING 22 exercise is organized by the Swedish Armed Forces in a strategic partnership with the United States. More than 2,500 participants will take part in the exercise. For the purposes of the exercise, a total of 8 remote locations have been identified, and distributed as follows: 4 in the Kingdom of Sweden and one each in Brazil, Bulgaria, Qatar and Finland, respectively.

Bulgaria participates with representatives of the Bulgarian Red Cross; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Republic of Bulgaria; the Office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Republic of Bulgaria; the International Organization for Migration and the Center for Research, Development and Improvement and NATO's Crisis Management and Disaster Response Capabilities.

The exercise includes a wide range of functional areas, with military and civilian participants sharing responsibilities for its planning, implementation and evaluation. It aims to increase the skills of representatives of civilian and military structures for interaction and cooperation in crises. The variety of different professional organizational cultures, combined with the experience in a wide range of areas, adds to the exercise value in terms of preparation and provides an opportunity for training in different areas. All these activities help build knowledgeable and thinking personalities.

DEAR OFFICERS AND STUDENTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

By participating in the exercise you will broaden your knowledge and skills to work in a joint, civil-military and multinational environment since "VIKING 22" is a step towards promoting mutual understanding, trust, cooperation and interoperability between all involved and affected forces, organizations and personnel. In the course of the exercise, you will gain experience, which you will be able to confidently use in practice.

DEAR PARTICIPANTS, an old and successful master in his field was once asked the following question:

- What is the secret to your success?
- The right decisions, he replied.
- And what is the secret of the right decisions?
- Experience, he replied.
- And what is the secret of that experience?
- Wrong decisions, the old master concluded with a smile.

I wish you a lot of success. Don't be afraid to learn from your mistakes. Do not stop improving based on the gained experience. Because experience will allow you to be confident along your career path and move forward boldly.